

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 15220 01 OF 03 212014Z

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0209

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 15220

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR, FR

SUBJECT: SOVIET PARTY DELEGATION IN PARIS

REF: (A) PARIS A-799 (NOV. 28, 1973), (B) PARIS 11319

(LIMDIS) (C) PARIS 12090

1. SUMMARY. IT SEEMS QUITE LIKELY THAT THE SUDDEN ARRIVAL ON JUNE 19 IN PARIS OF A SOVIET PARTY DELEGATION HEADED BY CANDIDATE POLITBURO MEMBER PONOMAREV IS A RESULT OF GROWING STRAIN BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTIES. PONOMAREV'S MISSION SEEMS DESIGNED TO SMOOTH OVER DIFFERENCES WHICH AROSE DURING THE RECENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE SOVIET POLICY AT THE GOVERNMENT AND PARTY LEVEL. PCF MAY HOPE IN PARTICULAR FOR DISCUSSION OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY AIMS, NOT ONLY TOWARD GISCARD, BUT GENERALLY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF "PEACE PROGRAM", ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF PONOMAREV'S RECENT VISIT TO US. END SUMMARY.

2. IN ANALYZING THE TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
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PAGE 02 PARIS 15220 01 OF 03 212014Z

THE PCF, THE GOF AND THE USSR, WE CONCLUDED LAST FALL

(REF A) THAT EACH POINT OF LINKAGE WAS BEING STRETCHED, AND THAT IN PARTICULAR SOVIET RELATIONS WITH THE PCF WERE BECOMING LOOSER AS THE PARTY LEADERSHIP BECAME MORE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN A "COMMON FRONT" GOVERNMENT. THIS TENDENCY WAS CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED DURING THE RECENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN. SOVIET AMBASSADOR CHERVONENKO'S CALL ON GISCARD JUST AFTER THE RESULTS OF THE FIRST ROUND HAD PITTED HIM AGAINST THE PCF-SUPPORTED CANDIDATE MITTERRAND CAUSED THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS TO MAKE THEIR FIRST DIRECT PUBLIC CRITICISM OF A SOVIET ACTION SINCE THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA (REF B). THE OPINION IS UNIVERSAL HERE THAT FRENCH COMMUNIST LEADERS WERE FURIOUS OVER THIS SOVIET INTERVENTION IN THE CAMPAIGN, AND THE SUBSEQUENT SOVIET LOW-LEVEL COMPLAINT AGAINST THE REMARKS OF GISCARD'S CLOSEST ADVISOR DID LITTLE TO DAMPEN THEIR IRE. (REF C).

3. WE ARE TOLD BY A YUGOSLAV EMBASSY COUNSELLOR THAT PCF GENERAL SECRETARY MARCHAIS WAS SHARPLY AND OPENLY CRITICAL OF THE SOVIET POSTURE DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AT A RECENT HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF THE UNITED LEFT. MORE SPECIFICALLY, ACCORDING TO LE MONDE SENIOR FOREIGN EDITOR MICHEL TATU, THE PCF HAS BEGUN TO MODIFY ITS PREVIOUSLY MOSCOW-INSPIRED POSITION OF ALL-OUT OPPOSITION TO THE FRENCH DETERRENT FORCE. ACCORDING TO HIM, THIS CHANGE IN ATTITUDE CAME OUT RECENTLY IN ONE OF THE COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF THE UNITED LEFT WHICH WAS REVIEWING THE JOINT PROGRAM. THE PCF REPRESENTATIVE REPORTEDLY ARGUED THAT ALL FRENCH LAND-BASED MISSILES SHOULD BE ELIMINATED, SINCE THEY COULD ONLY BE TARGETED AGAINST THE USSR. HOWEVER, NUCLEAR SUBMARINES WERE DIFFERENT, BEING ABLE TO DEFEND AGAINST A WIDE VARIETY OF THREATS, AND SHOULD THEREFORE BE RETAINED. MEANWHILE THE COMMUNIST DAILY L'HUMANITE HAS BEGUN TO TEMPER ITS USUAL UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT OF SOVIET POLICIES, AND ON JUNE 8 IT PUBLISHED A RETORT TO AN ARTICLE BY A PROMINENT SOVIET THEORETICIAN WHICH HAD APPEARED THE PREVIOUS EVENING IN LE MONDE. ITS MAJOR COMPLAINT WAS THE SUGGESTION BY THE SOVIET COMMENTATOR THAT "PEACEFUL

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PAGE 03 PARIS 15220 01 OF 03 212014Z

COEXISTENCE" COULD HELP RESOLVE THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF CAPITALIST STATES. ACCORDING TO L'HUMANITE, THIS COULD ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THE ELIMINATION OF MONOPLIES THROUGH CLASS STRUGGLE.

4. THIS IS CLEARLY THE NUB OF THE PROBLEM FOR THE PCF. THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS, AS WELL AS OTHERS THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD MOVEMENT, HAVE OFTEN FOUND

THEMSELVES SACRIFICED TO SOVIET NATIONAL INTERESTS.  
THE PCF HAS TRADITIONALLY REMAINED LOYAL TO MOSCOW,  
BUT IT IS NOW BEGINNING TO SHOW AN INCREASING  
TENDENCY TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THE ITALIAN COMM-  
UNISTS. MARCHAIS' MOST RECENT PUBLIC PERFORMANCE ON  
TELEVISION JUNE 17 SEEMED DESIGNED TO PROJECT A NEW

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PAGE 01 PARIS 15220 02 OF 03 212015Z

66

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 PARIS 15220

COMMUNIST PARTY IMAGE -- TO TRANSFORM IT, IN THE WORDS  
OF ONE FRENCH COMMENTATOR, INTO "A PARTY LIKE ALL THE  
OTHERS." A FRANCE SOIR REPORTER WHO FOLLOWS THE  
POLITICS OF THE LEFT CLOSELY, CLAIMS THAT MARCHAIS IS  
CONCENTRATING HIS ATTENTION ON INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND  
THAT HE IS DEDICATED TO MAINTAINING THE COMMON FRONT  
WITH THE SOCIALISTS. HOWEVER, FOR THIS TACTIC TO  
SUCCEED, HE NEEDS A LARGE POPULAR BASE, AND HE  
REALIZES THAT THE COMMUNIST APPEAL IS LIMITED,  
ESPECIALLY AMONG THE YOUNG, IF HE APPEARS TO FOLLOW  
THE SOVIET TUNE AT EVERY STEP. ACCORDING TO THIS

REPORTER, MARCHAIS HAS ACCORDINGLY DECIDED TO PURSUE A DOMESTIC POLICY DESIGNED TO BROADEN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE PCF, SO AS TO GIVE IT GREATER BARGAINING LEVERAGE WITHIN THE "UNITED LEFT." HE HAS LEFT TO HIS FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPECIALIST JEAN KANAPA THE TASK OF ATTEMPTING TO RECONCILE THESE POLICIES WITH SOVIET INTERESTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.

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PAGE 02 PARIS 15220 02 OF 03 212015Z

5. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THERE IS A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT AMONG FRENCH POLITICAL OBSERVERS THAT THIS STRATEGY HAS ACTUALLY BEEN CONCEIVED IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH THE SOVIETS. IT HOLDS THAT MOSCOW HAS ALLOWED THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS TO SHOW GREATER INDEPENDENCE FROM ITS INFLUENCE, IN EXCHANGE, PERHAPS, FOR SUPPORT ON ISSUES SUCH AS THE HOLDING OF A NEW WORLD COMMUNIST CONFERENCE. HOWEVER, THE PCF HAS NOT YET TAKEN A POSITION ON THE WORLD CONFERENCE, AND WE FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD ACQUIESCE IN ALLOWING THEMSELVES TO BE OPENLY CRITICIZED SO AS TO FURTHER THE DOMESTIC AMBITIONS OF THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS. THIS IS UNLIKELY, IF ONLY BECAUSE MARCHAIS' PRINCIPAL SOCIALIST ALLY, MITTERRAND, HAS ALWAYS BEEN DISTRUSTED BY MOSCOW. IN FACT, IT WAS ONLY TWO YEARS AGO THAT HE WAS BEING PUBLICLY DENOUNCED BY THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR HERE FOR HIS VIEWS ON THE EMIGRATION OF SOVIET JEWS AND THE TREATMENT OF DISSIDENTS IN THE USSR.

6. WE THUS CONCLUDE THAT THERE IS INDEED A GROWING DIVERGENCE BETWEEN SOVIET AND FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY VIEWS, AND THAT THIS HAS MOTIVATED PONOMAREV'S VISIT. AS THE QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR EAST EUROPE SEES IT, THE PCF IS CURRENTLY SHOWING ITSELF TO BE "MORE ORTHODOX THAN THE POPE" ON DOMESTIC ISSUES. IT IS SEEKING TO IMPLEMENT A CLASSIC BROAD FRONT STRATEGY FOR THE PURPOSE OF WINNING POLITICAL POWER AT A TIME WHEN THE SOVIETS, FOR REASONS OF STATE INTEREST, CONTINUE TO CULTIVATE CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNISTS' POLITICAL ADVERSARIES.

7. WITH HIS LONG-STANDING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST PARTIES IN NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, PONOMAREV IS THE LOGICAL CHOICE FOR THIS FENCE-MENDING MISSION, AND HE HAS PLAYED A SIMILAR ROLE IN THE PAST WITH THE PCF. IN VIEW OF HIS RECENT TRIP TO THE UNITED STATES, HE IS ALSO IN A POSITION TO EXPLAIN SOVIET GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES OF DETENTE, "PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE" AND BREZHNEV'S "PEACE PROGRAM" IN ESPECIALLY AUTHORITATIVE TERMS.

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PAGE 03 PARIS 15220 02 OF 03 212015Z

8. THE KEY QUESTION FOR US POLICY IS THE IMPACT  
FRENCH-SOVIET PARTY DIFFERENCES MIGHT HAVE ON DETENTE.  
WHILE WE DEFER TO EMBASSY MOSCOW'S JUDGMENT, OUR OWN

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PAGE 01 PARIS 15220 03 OF 03 212021Z

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ACTION EUR-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 PARIS 15220

BELIEF IS THAT IT WILL HAVE A MINIMAL INFLUENCE ON  
SOVIET ATTITUDES. IT COULD STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF  
THOSE WITHIN THE SOVIET HIERARCHY WHO MIGHT ARGUE THAT  
DETENTE JEOPARDIZES THE UNITY OF THE COMMUNIST MOVE-  
MENT, AND THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, IT WAS A MISTAKE TO GIVE  
SOVIET-FRENCH GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS PRIORITY DURING  
THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. HOWEVER, DESPITE THE STRENGTH

AND INFLUENCE OF THE PCF, ITS INTERESTS ARE CLEARLY OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE TO THE SOVIETS. ACCORDING TO A SOVIET EMBASSY COUNSELLOR WHO TALKED WITH HIM THE EVENING OF JUNE L9, PONOMAREV IS A SOLID ADVOCATE OF DETENTE AND EXTREMELY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FORTH-COMING MOSCOW SUMMIT. FOR A SOVIET PARTY OFFICIAL WHO HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS CAREER IN PROMOTING THE AIMS OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT AND, ASSUMING IT CAN BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE, INDICATES THE GENERAL LINE PONOMAREV WILL BE TAKING IN HIS INTER-PARTY MEETINGS HERE.

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PAGE 02 PARIS 15220 03 OF 03 212021Z

9. WE WOULD ANTICIPATE THAT PONOMAREV WILL SEEK TO RECONCILE BREZHNEV'S "PEACE PROGRAM" WITH ULTIMATE COMMUNIST OBJECTIVES IN IDEOLOGICAL TERMS DURING HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PCF LEADERS. HE CAN ALSO BE EXPECTED TO MAKE A PITCH FOR WORLD COMMUNIST CONFERENCE. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE HE WILL FIND FRENCH COMMUNIST LEADERS FAR LESS MALLABLE THAN IN THE PAST. HAVING COME CLOSE TO WINNING A ROLE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE, THE PCF SEEMS LESS AND LESS WILLING TO SERVE AS MOSCOW'S SPEAR CARRIER, AND MORE ANXIOUS TO PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN ITSELF AND THE SOVIETS SO AS TO ENHANCE ITS IMMEDIATE POLITICAL PROSPECTS.  
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## Message Attributes

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